

busy with his own fancy, while Hector M'Bride kept pressing his hands upon the pommel of his saddle to create, as far as possible, a diversion in favour of the main point of contact between himself and his horse. In this way they arrived at an inn, or grocery, upon the roadside, and stopped to refresh themselves. The landlord was a fortunate character, who, by asking no questions and answering none, managed to carry on a flourishing business during all the troubles of the times, and was patronized by Whigs, British, and Tories. While the travellers were here resting themselves, there came up a roving Georgian, a sallow, lank, and bilious-looking customer, whose hat, to use a modern phrase, was extremely "seedy," and whose threadbare dress would have been comfortably cool during the dog-days, in any other climate except that where the fashionable summer costume is said to be a shirt collar and a pair of spurs. He immediately called for a drink, and, taking his glass in his hand, announced himself as "John Nipper in perticler," a gentleman at large, who was ready to make the acquaintance of any good fellow, and who could "out-run, out-jump, and stick his nose farther in the ground than any man on this side of Jerico." Having swallowed his brandy, he turned, with a patronizing air, to the Alamancers, and desired to know if they wished for any sport.

"We are not sportsmen," answered the master; whereat John Nipper in perticler looked most particularly hard at him, surveying him from head to foot, and from foot to head, and back again.

"Well, friends," said he at length, in compassionate tones, "I'm sorry for you, and the best we can do is to take a drink. Fill three glasses, landlord; and now, as we're all ready, I wish to propose a toast. First, here's to ourselves, individually and collectively; secondly, here's to you and towards you, if I hadn't 'ave seed you I wouldn't 'ave knowed you; and, thirdly, and lastly, here's to the widow Powell!"

"I shall not drink that toast, sir, in such company!" said Corny, throwing down his glass with violence.

"I say you must drink it, though," replied John.

"And I say I will not drink it," retorted Corny.

"Yes, but you must, old Snufflebags."

"Yes, but I won't, puppy, dog, knave, villain!"

"Wall, them's hard terms you use, old friend," answered John Nipper, "but I attribute it all to your ignorance of the English language. Now I'll prove to you why you ought to drink the toast: aint you fond of good horse-flesh?"

"Not particularly."

"But don't you like a clean-legged, high-blooded, mettlesome nag, that goes like a bird a-flyin'?"

"I can't say but I prefer a more gentle animal," answered Corny; "but what has this to do with the toast?"

"Adzactly, and now I'll bring you to the pint. I knowed, as soon as I saw you, what kind of a crittur suited you. You want a good-natered, kind-conditioned, soft-go'in animal that'll love and respect you, and that's easy to git on and off of, don't you?"

"Such a one would suit."

"And if it's a mare it will do?"

"Certainly."

"Good!" shouted John; "now the widow Powell is jist sich a crittur, for John Nipper in perticler has tried her long enough to know."

"You scurvy knave! you foul-mouthed puppy! you lying scoundrel! say again that the widow Powell is a mare, and I'll hew you into shavings!"

"Jemini, Jerusalem! Stranger, I've heern tell of men bewitched, and who couldn't tell a black sheep from the devil; but I never before saw one who couldn't tell a hoss from a human bein. If you aint a born nateral then *I'm d—d!* I say, landlord, whar *did* he come from?"

The individual in question, as well as Hector M'Bride, seeing the mistake, explained matters to the satisfaction of the parties, and they all adjourned into the yard to see John's nag.

"Walk up, gentlemen," cried John, "walk up and see for yourselves. Aint them pasterns clean and nice? Did you ever see sich a head and sich eyes afore? She's not perfection, is she, nor the cream of Tartary, nor the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley? No, no, she aint none of these, nor she aint a dove, nor a lamb, nor a human crittur? Nor she aint gentle and knowin, and lovin neither: here, Sally, follow me."

With this he threw the bridle over her head, and, running round the house, she followed him, wheeling when he wheeled, and keeping close at his heels as he muttered to himself: "No, no, Sally, you can't talk, nor sing, nor read and write and cipher. You're not high-larned, Sally, and never went to school; but the way you can think is a sin!" With this John mounted, and, putting her into a rapid motion, exclaimed: "This is what I call the Gor-g-y step! I could go to sleep here in five minutes by the watch, and never wake till she stopped. If you had the rheumatiz in all your bones, the lumbago in your back, and a side-ache, and a head-ache, and tooth-ache, you'd rather be on Sally's back than on the softest feather bed. If you would'nt, darn *my* soul!"

"Friend," said Demijohn, "I have ttle